FROME RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1911.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit the following Report on the Public Health of the Frome Rural District for the year ending 31st December, 1911.

I append to this Report FIVE TABULATED STATEMENTS as required by the Local Government Board, and I am sending copies of the Report to the Local Government Board, and the Somerset County Council.

From the Tables enclosed, the following Statistics are taken :—

AREA OF DISTRICT—51,448 acres.

POPULATION—11,172 (1911).

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES—2675 (approx.).

AVERAGE NUMBER OF INHABITANTS PER HOUSE—4·2.

The District consists chiefly of grass land well wooded, lying upon a subsoil of either sandstone, limestone, or clay.

The occupations are chiefly Agriculture and Coal Mining, neither of which appear to have a detrimental effect upon the public health.

The amount of Poor Law Relief for the Half-year ended Michaelmas, 1911, was 1/6 per head of population.

The Frome Victoria Hospital during the year treated 40 patients from the Rural District, who however paid a considerable sum towards their maintenance.

The BIRTH RATE is not quite so high as last year, but is up to the average of the last five years.

1911.	1910.	1909.	1908.	1907.
22·2	23·1	22·7	20·5	22·5 (per 1000 living).

This rate is low compared with that of the whole of England and Wales 24·8. Owing to the extensive migration of young adults to the large towns, the population contains a small proportion of women of marriageable age than the normal.

The DEATH RATE is about the average, being above that of last year, but below that of the year before.

1911.	1910.	1909.	1908.	1907.
10·5	9	11·7	10	12·1 (per 1000 living).

This comprises favourably both with the rest of the administrative County (for 1910) which is 10·9, and with the whole Country which is 13·4.

The INFANTILE MORTALITY is apparently not so low as last year. The figure is however, very satisfactory, as in spite of the dry summer there are only seven infantile deaths from Diarrhœa and alike complaints, and more than half the increase on the preceding year is accounted for by premature births.

1911.	1910.	1909.	1908.	1907.
75·6	36	80	80	84 (per 1000 births).

The ZYMOTIC DEATH RATE, or number who have died from epidemic diseases is practically nil; those shewn being two from Influenza and one from Whooping Cough. The figures are as follows :—

1911.	1910.	1909.	1908.	1907.
·26	·18	·4	·2	·7 (per 1000 living).

BIRTHS.—The total number of Births is 251 : Males 127 ; Females 124 ; of these 19 died under 1 year of age.

The CAUSES AT DEATH at all ages are as follows :—

Whooping Cough	1
Influenza	2
Phthisis	5
Tubmeningitis	1
Rheumatic Fever	1
Cancer	7
Bronchitis	9
Broncho Pneumonia	1
Pneumonia	13
Diarrhœa	9
Nephritis	2
Premature Birth	7
Accidents	7
Old Age	20
Heart Disease	30
Other Causes	13
	128

The Ages at which Death occurred were as follows :—

Under 1 year	19
1 to 2 years	~~6~~ 5
2 to 5 ,,	1
5 to 15 ,,	2
15 to 25 ,,	~~3~~ 2
25 to 45 ,,	11
45 to 65 ,,	~~26~~ 25
65 upwards	63
	128

The Causes of Early Deaths (under 1 year) were as follows :—

Diarrhœa	6
Debility and Premature Birth	7
Bronchitis	1
Pneumonia	1
Whooping Cough	1
Influenza	1
Other Causes	2

The Infectious Diseases Notification Act has been in force in this District since 1890, and works satisfactorily, being of great value in giving immediate information of Infectious Disease, thus enabling steps to be taken to prevent the spread of the same.

During the past year only 18 cases have been notified as compared with 86 in 1910, and 39 in 1909. These were :—

Diphtheria	1
Erysipelas	1
Scarlet Fever	16
	18

None of these proved fatal.

The cases of Infectious Disease occurred as follows :—

Place.	Month.		Cases.
Laverton	May	Diphtheria	—1
Whatley	February	Erysipelas	—1
Foxcote	February	Scarlet Fever	—1
Leigh	February		1
Faulkland	June		1
Selwood	September		1
Coleford	October		1
Norton	October		1
Norton	November		1
Norton	December		9
			18

There were also two cases of Phthisis notified ; one at Coleford in February, and one at Charlton in December.

Scarlet Fever broke out in Norton St. Philip during November and December, and at one time it threatened to be serious ; fortunately it was almost entirely confined to the inmates of two adjoining houses. To cope with this, the temporary Isolation Hospital at Coleford which had been rented by the Council since the last epidemic was re-opened in the first week of December, and six patients were treated till the end of the month. The disease was of a mild type, there being only one serious case, where Nephritis set in.

Diarrhœa amongst Children.—As the amount was not large no special steps were taken with regard to it.

School Closing.—The following Schools have been closed during the year in consequence of Infectious Disease :—

Wanstrow for Measles—February 1st to March 13th.
Buckland for Mumps—March 3rd to March 25th.
Kilmersdon for Measles—April 13th to May 21st.
Mells for Measles—May 16th to June 11th.
Nunney for Measles—June 12th to July 16th.
Norton—Scarlet Fever—December 5th to December 19th.

Where Infectious Disease has occurred I have immediately visited the case, and made all necessary arrangements, except in two instances at Norton St. Philip, where it was more expeditious to remove the patients to Coleford immediately. When required, a printed notice calling attention to the Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890, and also a printed notice to the Inspector, who provides disinfectants and visits the house from time to time to see that my instructions to the occupier are being carried out. A notice is also sent, if necessary, to the Head Teacher of the local School, warning him not to admit children to the School from the infected house, which however is rarely needed as the Teachers are fully alive to the importance of this step. At the termination of the illness the Inspector fumigates and disinfects the premises.

Water Supply.—There are eight separate Water Supplies to the District which are under the control of the Council. These are those serving (chiefly) Buckland, Nunney, Wanstrow, Coleford, Leigh-on-Mendip, Vobster, and Hemington ; in addition to these some Districts are supplied from the Frome Urban and some from the Radstock Mains. There are sundry other private ones, besides wells.

The public sources are good and a favourable Report was sent by the Public Analyst upon samples forwarded to him from all the Council's Supplies, although in certain Districts the dry summer caused considerable shortage, especially in those Districts dependent upon wells. Spring Gardens is very poorly supplied, and arrangements have been made for a much-needed extension from the Town Main. Road also needs better accommodation, and the matter is now under consideration.

A constant look-out is kept on all wells, and during the year I have had 16 samples of water submitted to me for analysis; of these 10 proved to be good water, and one I referred to the County Laboratory for bacteriological analysis, the Report on which was not to hand by the end of the year. In the case of those which were bad, steps were taken either to prohibit the use of the water or to cleanse the source.

No serious case of River Pollution occurred in the District.

Drainage and Sewerage.—A further extension of the Beckington Sewer has been made to include some outlaying houses whence the Drainage caused a dangerous nuisance.

Road, Nunney, and Beckington possess Drainage Schemes which work satisfactorily, and in these places water closets are used. In the other parts of the District either middens or dry earth closets are employed, where possible the latter are being introduced.

House-to-House Inspections have been diligently carried out throughout the whole District, and any defects found have been remedied; the actual number of inspections made is 420. Altogether 60 Nuisances have been discovered and remedied as follows:—

Overcrowding	7
Dirty Houses	5
Other matter, *i.e.*, defective closets, defective drainage, keeping of animals, etc.	48
	60

Housing Accommodation.—An application was made at Writhlington under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, the matter was investigated, but was found that there was no necessity to proceed with it.

The accommodation appears to be satisfactory, and where new buildings are erected, they are carefully supervised by the Council.

Scavenging.—Coleford is the only part of the District where this is done, it is satisfactorily carried out there; elsewhere it is not needed.

Public Health Tuberculosis Regulations, 1908.—Under these Regulations I have received notification of two cases, both of these I visited; one was removed to the Frome Workhouse, and the other supplied with a sputum flask and given instructions.

Food and Drugs Act.—No cases have arisen.

Factories and Workshops.—There are 28 of these in the District, viz.:—18 Bakehouses; 3 Laundries; 1 Brush Factory; and 6 Workshops: these were inspected 42 times. There have been 80 inspections of Workmen making Clothing.

No matter has arisen under the Act requiring prosecution or reference to H.M. Inspector.

Milk Supply.—This is good. There are 237 persons registered under the Dairies and Cowsheds Order; seven for the first time this year.

Slaughter Houses.—There are 15 in the District, and the Licenses have been renewed during the year, and are frequently inspected.

School Inspections.—During the year I have visited the Schools in the District and found the accommodation satisfactory. I have inspected 562 School Children. The physique of the children, is as a rule, good, but some arrangement by which dental treatment can be obtained is urgently required.

Isolation Hospital.—There is no Isolation Hospital at present. The Council rented a house at Coleford which is opened when necessary, which will accommodate about 12 patients suffering from one disease. Negotiations however are almost concluded between the Urban and Rural Councils for a proper Isolation Hospital to serve both Districts, accommodating at least 20 patients.

Inspectors of Nuisances.—There are two—one in each District—and each furnishes a Report. I am pleased to bear testimony to the very excellent way in which their duties are performed, and the promptness with which my orders and suggestions are carried out.

In conclusion, I beg to thank the Council and their Officers for the invariable courtesy and support I have received from them in my work for the public health.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

C. R. HOWARD, B.A., B.C., M.D. (Cantab),
M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.),
Medical Officer of Health of the Frome Rural District Council.

FROME

Rural District Council.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1911.

January 30th, 1912.

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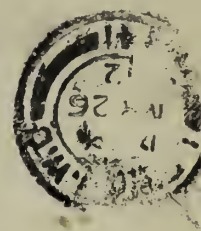
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